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April 4, 2006

Mr. Bill Brattain
CRWQCB Central Valley Region
11020 Sun City Drive #200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-6114

Dear Mr. Brattain,

It was with great distress that I read the proposed WDRs for composting in the Central Valley Region. Although the Z-Best Products composting facility is in the Bay Area and would not be covered by the regulations, the overall health of the compost industry is of great concern to me. After reviewing the draft WDRs and discussing the potential costs with a civil engineer, I am convinced that the adoption of these regulations would eradicate the composting industry in the Central Valley.

With the help of the current engineer's cost estimating guide and a registered civil P.E., I looked at the potential cost to improve a flat 25 acre site to the proposed standard. This would include cutting, filling and compacting 108,000 cubic yards of dirt, excavating and lining a two acre retention pond, and base rocking and placing 4" of asphalt on 23 acres. Engineering and permitting fees would also be significant. *The cost of improvements for the sample 25-acre site would exceed \$4.8 million dollars.*

Because green material can be used as landfill cover (ADC) and still count as recycling, it would no longer be cost-competitive to compost green material. I would guess that most dairy manure would end up in landfills as well. Most compost facilities are run by small private companies and would be unable to raise the required capital even if tip fees were drastically increased. Municipalities that are willing to pay incrementally higher costs to compost green material would balk at drastic fee increases when ADC is still a viable option.

Z-Best Products is a 77 acre facility composting green material and MSW for 16 Municipalities in the greater Bay Area. I can tell you with absolute certainty that if the owners of Z-Best Products were faced with \$5-8 million dollars in capital improvements we would terminate or default our contracts and close the doors on the facility. A business simply cannot raise that kind of capital on the slim profit margins available in the compost industry. The State would lose 225,000 tons per year of diversion.

I am unaware of any scientific studies showing that composting is such a severe threat to water quality in California that such drastic measures need to be taken. I believe that the California Integrated Waste Management Board already has adequate regulations on the books covering drainage, runoff, and pad construction. These regulations are just not consistently enforced. Perhaps your effort would be better spent pressuring the CIWMB to give their Local Enforcement Agents the guidance they need in interpreting and enforcing existing regulations in a uniform manner across the varied jurisdictions.

I appreciate your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Greg Ryan", written in a cursive style.

Greg Ryan
General Manager